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1974/11/26

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Authority NWD 970520
By AT NARA Date 9/24/97Winston Lord
Tuesday = 11/26/74Place
PRCTHE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Vice Premier of the State Council, People's Republic of China
Ch'iao Kuan-hua, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Wang Hai-jung, PRC Vice Foreign Minister
Ambassador Huang Chen, Chief of the PRC Liaison Office, Washington

Lin P'ing, Director, Department of American and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
T'ang Wen-heng, Deputy Director, Department of American and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tsien Ta-yung, Counselor, PRC Liaison Office, Washington

Ting Yuan-hung, Director, United States Office, Department of American and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Chao Chi-hua, Deputy Director, United States Office, Department of American and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Chang Han-chih, Translator
Notetaker

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Donald Rumsfeld, Assistant to the President Ambassador George Bush, Chief of the United States Liaison Office, Peking

Winston Lord, Director, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State

Philip C. Habib, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Peter Rodman, Staff Member, National Security Council

Richard H. Solomon, Senior Staff Member, National Security Council

Karlene Knieps, Notetaker

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TOP SECRET/SENSITIVEDATE AND TIME: Tuesday, November 26, 1974
3:45 - 5:00 p.m.PLACE: Great Hall of the People
Peking, People's Republic of China

SUBJECT: Normalization

Secretary Kissinger: They outnumber us today.Vice Premier Teng: Some more on our side are coming. I don't think you will ever outnumber us because we have 800 million.Secretary Kissinger: My children and my wife very much appreciated the tour of the Forbidden City this morning. It was very nice.Vice Premier Teng: Did they like it at all?Secretary Kissinger: Very much.Vice Premier Teng: How is the health of your wife? I hope it is better.Secretary Kissinger: It is much better.Vice Premier Teng: If you need any medical help you just let us know.Secretary Kissinger: You are very nice. She is going to watch acupuncture.Vice Premier Teng: Well that medical technique of China is almost as old as the Great Wall of China. A few hundred years later than the Great Wall. It was created at the time of the Han Dynasty.TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

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Secretary Kissinger: On one trip I brought a doctor along who was very skeptical of it and after he saw it he was very impressed.

Vice Premier Teng: It goes as far back as about two hundred years after Christ. During the time of the three kingdoms. It was during that time people were able to have an operation with acupuncture.

Secretary Kissinger: It is interesting to reflect how it could have been invented. Because as I understand if, to this day nobody understands the theory, why it works, just that it works.

Vice Premier Teng: I think mainly it was through practice.

Secretary Kissinger: Who go the first idea to stick a needle into somebody?

Vice Premier Teng: It was combined with the use of herb medicine.

Secretary Kissinger: Who would have thought if you stick a needle into somebody it would help him? No other civilization thought about that.

Vice Premier Teng: Shall we come back to our subject? We will listen to the Doctor. All right?

Secretary Kissinger: Let me discuss the subject of normalization. I understand that Mr. Habib has already had a talk on the bilateral relations.

I am confident that our side can keep multiplying the complexities as long as your side can. It is something we are very good at.

Let me speak about the normalization problem.

When we met the first time, in our first two meetings [in 1971] we discussed completing the process during the second term of President Nixon.

We said that we would reduce our military forces on Taiwan, and we repeated that in the Shanghai Communique. We said we would not support any two Chinas solution, or a one China-one Taiwan solution, or any variation.

And we would not encourage other countries to pursue such a policy.

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We have substantially maintained these commitments..

We have reduced our forces on Taiwan from over 10,000 to about 3,200 today. We encouraged the Japanese movement towards the People's Republic. This is in fact why you can speak of a Japanese solution. We have given no encouragement to a two Chinas or one China-one Taiwan solution; quite the contrary.

Now the problem is how we can complete the process. I would like to divide it into a number of parts:

-- There is the problem of the diplomatic status of Taiwan, and of course of the diplomatic relations between us.

-- There is the problem of our military forces on Taiwan.

-- And there is the problem of our defense commitment to Taiwan.

Our problem is different from the situation of Japan, or for that matter from the situation of any other country with which you have normalized relations, in two respects:

First, there is a formal defense relationship. Secondly, there is a rather substantial group in the United States that historically has been pro-Taiwan.

Together with your cooperation we have been able to neutralize the pro-Taiwan element in the United States by moving step-by-step in a very careful manner. But what we have to keep in mind for our common interest is to prevent Sino-American relations from becoming an extremely contentious issue in the United States.

It is not in your interest, or in that of the United States, to have emerge a Senator or Senatorial group which does to Sino-American relations what Senator Jackson has attempted to do to United States - Soviet relations.

I am speaking very frankly to you so that we understand each other exactly. After I have put my considerations before you, you will of course give me yours. Then we will see if we can solve the problem. I am here to remove obstacles, not to hide behind them.

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We believe, as I have said, that while cannons have been fired -- mostly in one direction -- we have also had common fronts.

As the Premier said yesterday, they were mostly produced by the "polar bear."

We do not want to jeopardize that possibility [of developing common fronts with the PRC] given the dangers that may be ahead, and keeping in mind what Chairman Mao said to me last year of the two strands -- normalization, and the international environment.

Now having said this, let me go back to the specific issues between us.

First, on the issue of the diplomatic status: We are prepared to solve this on substantially the Japan model; and with the one variation that it would be easiest for us if we could maintain a liaison office in Taiwan and an embassy in Peking. Except for that we would follow the Japan model.

With respect to the presence of [U.S.] troops on Taiwan, we are prepared to remove all our troops from Taiwan. We would like to agree with you on a schedule, a time-frame within which this will be accomplished -- by which we would reduce the forces by half by the summer of 1976, and the remainder to be removed by the end of 1977.

Incidentally, what I am discussing is not something to which we want to agree -- we can agree to it hear, but it should not be announced until the end of 1975, the agreement we make. But we want to come to an understanding about it now, that this is what would happen.

Now that leaves the last problem, which is our defense relationship to Taiwan. And this is a problem to which, in all frankness, we have not come up with a good answer.

Our problem is this: on the face of it, it is of course absurd to say one has a defense arrangement with a part of a country one recognizes, that is, which belongs to that country.

Secondly, we obviously have no interest in maintaining a strategic base on Taiwan after we have established diplomatic relations with Peking and recognized Peking as the legal government of all China.

But as I told the Foreign Minister in New York, we need a formula that enables us to say that at least for some period of time there are

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assurances of peaceful reintegration with can be reviewed after some interval in order to avoid the difficulties which I have described.

If we can, this would mean that we would have accepted Peking as the [legal] government [of China]. We would have withdrawn our recognition from Taiwan, we would have broken diplomatic relations with Taiwan. We would have withdrawn our troops from Taiwan. All that would remain is that we would have some relation to peaceful reintegration.

Speaking here frankly and realistically, the political and psychological effect of breaking relations is that our defense relationship will be eroded by the act of recognition. But we need a transition period for our public opinion in which this process can be accomplished without an excessive domestic strain.

These are our basic considerations. If we agree on the principles, we can then see what formula can then be worked out.

Vice Premier Teng: Is that all?

Secretary Kissinger: This is the essence, yes.

Let me emphasize one point. To us the question of the defense commitment is primarily a question of the way it can be presented politically. It is not a question of maintaining it for an indefinite period of time.

Vice Premier Teng: Well, actually this law was formulated by yourselves. Is that so?

Secretary Kissinger: Which law?

Vice Premier Teng: You are the ones who make the law. That is, the law of that defense commitment you have with Taiwan. That was fixed by yourselves.

Secretary Kissinger: Of course. That is absolutely true.

Vice Premier Teng: Well, since you can formulate a law, naturally you can also do away with it.

Secretary Kissinger: That is also true. Our point is not that it could not be done. Our point is that for reasons I have explained

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to you. it is not expedient to do -- well, the act of recognition in itself will change the nature of that arrangement because you cannot have a defense treaty with part of a country.

Vice Premier Teng: I have noticed the consideration which the Doctor has just mentioned. And I understand that all of these imaginations the Doctor has discussed with the Foreign Minister while he was in New York in October.

Secretary Kissinger: That is correct.

Vice Premier Teng: And I believe in principle the Foreign Minister gave you the answers on our side concerning the principal matters. In essence your imaginations -- your considerations -- cannot be considered as being in accord with the Japan model.

And we feel that in essence it is still a variation of one China and one Taiwan.

Secretary Kissinger: Why is that?

Vice Premier Teng: Well, this is primarily that you just reverse the position, change the position of the liaison office. The present situation is that we have established a liaison office in Peking -- we have established our liaison office in Washington and you have established one in Peking. And you keep an embassy in Taiwan. This in itself indicates there has not been the necessary conditions for the normalization of relations.

In other words, if you change this order, that is, to have an embassy in Peking and a liaison office in Taiwan, it is not the way to correct the problem.

People will come to the conclusion that it is actually a variation of one China and one Taiwan. Therefore, we find it difficult to accept this formula.

And just now you touched upon the question of the defense treaty. That is, the defense treaty which you have with Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan. Of course, if we are to achieve the normalization of relations between our two countries and abide by the course set in the Shanghai Communique, then the treaty you have with Taiwan must be done away with.

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The reasons actually have been given by the Doctor yourself just now.

Secretary Kissinger: The defense treaty can have no international status after the normalization of relations.

Vice Premier Teng: But still it has a substantial meaning.

So it appears that time is not ripe yet to solve this question, because according to your formula, it would not be possible for us to accept this method of normalization. It still looks as if you need Taiwan.

Secretary Kissinger: No, we do not need Taiwan. That is not the issue. I think that it is important to understand. That would be a mistake in understanding the problem.

What we would like to achieve is the disassociation from Taiwan in steps, in the manner we have done until now. There is no doubt that the status of Taiwan has been undermined by the process which we have followed. And this process would be rapidly accelerated by the ideas which we have advanced.

Vice Premier Teng: And the other question is the way [method] to solve the Taiwan problem. As for solving the Taiwan question, suppose you have broken diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Then the Taiwan question should be left with us Chinese to solve among ourselves.

As to what means we will [use to] solve the Taiwan question, I believe Chairman Mao Tse-tung made it very clear in his talk.

Secretary Kissinger: Chairman Mao, if I understood him correctly, made two statements: One was that he believed that the question would ultimately have to be solved by force. But he also stated that China could wait for one hundred years to bring this about, if I understood him correctly.

Vice Premier Teng: That was true. He did say that.

Of course, the number of "one hundred years" is a symbolic one.

Secretary Kissinger: Of course, I understood this. I was going to say that in one hundred years I will not be Secretary of State.

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I have to say this occasionally to give some hope to my associates. I understood it was symbolic. I understand also that after normalization that any attributes of sovereignty in the relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. have to be eliminated.

Vice Premier Teng: Chairman Mao Tse-tung made it very clear that the solving of the Taiwan problem is an internal affair of China, and should be left to the Chinese to solve.

Just now Dr. Kissinger said that on the Taiwan issue you wish to have a peaceful reintegration.

Secretary Kissinger: That is correct.

Vice Premier Teng: And I believe you mentioned something like a wish of the U.S. in having some part in this guarantee, relationship.

Secretary Kissinger: Let me explain what is our concern. We have not worked out a legal formula. We believe that it is -- what I am saying is capable of misinterpretation. Let me explain our position exactly.

When I came here in 1971, it was clear that we were starting a process that would lead to the gradual erosion of the position of Taiwan.

You would certainly not have been admitted to the United Nations in 1971 -- eventually it would have happened, but not in 1971. It would have taken longer. And the normalization with Japan would not have been accomplished so soon. We fully cooperated in this, and we established principles that sooner or later have been implemented. And we did this in all seriousness.

You know we have made no effort with any country to keep them from establishing relations with you and breaking them with Taiwan.

The problem we have is the impact internationally of a sudden total reversal of an American position on other friendly countries, and even perhaps on countries that are not friendly to either of us.

Vice Premier Teng: But on the other hand, if we agree to your formula we will also be creating an impact internationally that we have agreed to the formula of one China - one Taiwan.

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Secretary Kissinger: No, we will work to make it clear that it is not this type of situation. We will not now attempt a solution which we have both rejected.

We have, it seems to me, two basic choices. There are two roads we can now follow: We can continue the present process, which is tolerable, and gradually withdraw our forces from Taiwan, which will continue in any event -- whatever you decide here. We will increase our relationship with you as we have done in the past three years, and wait for the opportune time to complete the process with one decision.

Or, we can do a process in which we complete the political part of our relationship quickly and make it clear that we are solving the issues of sovereignty -- of one China and one Taiwan -- at once, and find a formula in which the symbolic thought of Chairman Mao is expressed. An effort of peaceful reintegration over a reasonable period of time. We do not want a voice in the discussion on peaceful reintegration. That should be left to the Chinese. We do not want to participate in that process.

Chang Han-chih: I'm not clear about the first part of your statement.

Secretary Kissinger: The Vice Premier said that of course the one hundred years is symbolic. I understood the symbolic nature of Chairman Mao's statement about a hundred years. I understood it to mean that you are willing to give the peaceful process time to work -- that while philosophically the resolution will probably come about by force, you are prepared to give the peaceful road a long opportunity.

We do not want to participate in the process of reintegration. And we have no difficulty affirming the principle of one China. So our issue is not one China, one Taiwan.

Foreign Minister Ch'iao: If I understand correctly, I see what you mean is that you are for one China, but the one China you want is a one China which is achieved through peaceful means.

Secretary Kissinger: Exactly. For at least a reasonable period of time. We want to avoid a situation where the United States signs a document which leads to a military solution shortly after normalization. But we do not want a commitment which maintains the separation. What we have in mind -- we may not know the formula, but what we have in mind seems compatible with what Chairman Mao says in terms of the process.

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Vice Premier Teng: We have just now checked on what Chairman Mao exactly said when he talked with Doctor, and we understand what he said is, "I don't think the normalization of relations between China and the United States will take one hundred years." So from this we understand that it does not mean that from what Chairman Mao says, that we do not wish to complete a process of the normalization as quickly as possible.

I think concerning the Taiwan question that at the same time it is also a question of the normalization of relations between China and the United States.

There are three principles to which we cannot give other consideration, which we cannot barter away. The first principle is that we insist -- that we should insist on the Shanghai Communique. That is, we refuse any method which will lead to the solution of "two Chinas," or "one China, one Taiwan," or any variation of these two.

The idea of setting up an embassy here in Peking and a liaison office in Taiwan is a variation on "one China-one Taiwan," which we cannot accept.

The second principle is that the solution of the Taiwan question is an internal issue of the Chinese people, and it can only be left to the Chinese people themselves to solve. As to what means we will use to finally solve the Taiwan question -- whether peaceful methods or non-peaceful methods -- it is a matter, an internal affair, which should be left to the Chinese people to decide.

The third point, which is also a principle to us, is that we do not admit that there can be another country which will take part in the solution of the Taiwan question, including the United States.

So it looks as if there is quite a distance between our two sides concerning this question. As I said just now, it appears that you still need Taiwan. If you still need Taiwan we can wait. We can wait until the time is more ripe for the solution of the question.

Secretary Kissinger: Let me comment on the three points. Then let me say one other thing.

Vice Premier Teng: We were checking with the records we have about what Chairman Mao said last year and we feel our understanding

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is correct. What Chairman Mao said last year is that we should separate the two things, that is, the relations between the United States and us and the relations between Taiwan and the United States. These two things should be separate.

Then the Chairman went on to say that if you break your diplomatic relations with Taiwan, then it will be possible to solve the issue of diplomatic relations. That is to say, like what we did with Japan. We understand that refers to the Japan model.

And then the Chairman went on to say that, as for the relation between Taiwan and us, we do not believe in peaceful transition.

Then the Chairman said we can do without Taiwan -- we can wait for one hundred years to solve the problem. And the Chairman also said, "As for the relation between you and us, I do not think that will take one hundred years to solve."

I think from this conversation the meaning is clear.

Secretary Kissinger: I agree. This is exactly my recollection of the conversation. From this I also made certain deductions, produced by my brain which is somewhat slower than that of the Chinese. I have never had a Chinese contradict me on my statement (laughter).

I remember once Prime Minister Chou En-lai made the comment that I was intelligent, and I said by Chinese standards you mean I am of medium intelligence. He did not contradict me either (laughter).

But let me say what I deduce from this conversation; because my understanding is exactly the same as what the Vice Premier has said.

I deduce from it that the precondition for normalization of relations is breaking diplomatic relations with Taiwan. That we are prepared to do. And I believe we can find a mutually satisfactory formula for this.

The second conclusion I draw from the statement of the Chairman was he believes diplomatic relations could be established, and after that there might be a time interval until the real integration of Taiwan into the PRC is complete -- in his perspective of history.

Now of the three principles you have mentioned, Mr. Vice Premier, the first is, in our judgment, no problem. We will work out a solution

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that leaves no doubt there is no "one China-one Taiwan." This is a soluble problem -- much easier than many other problems we have solved before.

Vice Premier Teng: But it won't do if you establish a liaison office in Taiwan, or for that matter a consulate.

Secretary Kissinger: I still believe this is a problem to which we can find a solution. I see the Ambassador Huang Chen has a very proprietary interest in the concept of a liaison office. He is the head of the only liaison office in the world which is headed by a Chinese Ambassador.

Huang Chen: My understanding about the nature of a liaison office is according to the ideas which Chairman Mao gave -- the nature of a liaison office.

Secretary Kissinger: I repeat, I believe we can find a solution to the first problem. Although we are not now in a detailed consultation. I believe we can find a solution to it.

The second question: We do not wish to participate in any way in the process of reintegration, or in the process of realization of reintegration.

The third problem is the one I have put to you: How we can avoid the impression that we have simply jettisoned people with whom we have been associated without giving -- as in the passage you read to me, how we can have a period of time to give this process a chance to work.

Namely, that diplomatic relations can be established before the process of reintegration is completed -- how this can be expressed in our agreement. This is the serious question.

It seems to me we have two roads we can take, and we are prepared to take either.

One road is that we, the United States, proceed unilaterally to reduce its standing on Taiwan, the way we have been doing. We will do this by withdrawing troops. And at the appropriate time before 1976 Reducing the seniority of our diplomatic representation.

The other is that we begin a negotiation on the three points which we have discussed here. I do not believe our differences need be insurmountable.

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Vice Premier Teng: I believe we can continue our discussion on this issue. I do not think we have too much time this afternoon for the question. It looks as if probably it is difficult for both sides to reach any agreement on this visit of yours.

We have another consideration about the relations between our two countries. That is, as I have said before, some people have been saying the relations between our two countries have been cooling down. The Chinese Government is therefore extending an invitation to you. That is to say, the Chinese Government wishes to extend a formal invitation to the Secretary of Defense of the United States, Mr. Schlesinger, to visit China. We think this would be a good answer to all these opinions which are going on in the world.

Secretary Kissinger: It will produce a Politburo meeting in the Kremlin.

Vice Premier Teng: We don't mind. Well, actually it is our wish that they have a Politburo meeting there. But we really extend this invitation with all seriousness.

Secretary Kissinger: I appreciate this, and let me think about it. Let me say, however, one thing in principle. We believe from our side it is highly desirable to show that our relationship has not chilled and that we should continue to show not only that it has not chilled but that it is continuing to improve. And whatever the decision on this particular invitation, I am certain we can between us find methods of showing a substantial improvement in our relationship.

Vice Premier Teng: We will be waiting for your answer then -- from your government.

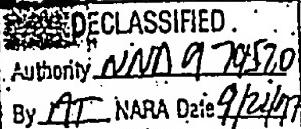
Foreign Minister Ch'iao: We understand Mr. Bush is going to give a reception this afternoon.

Ambassador Bush: My wife has spent most of her time waiting, so don't worry about that.

Vice Premier Teng: We suggest 9:00 tomorrow morning for the next meeting.

Secretary Kissinger: I suggest that at the beginning, for perhaps one-half hour, we have a very small group. On your side it is up to you. I will bring only three people, including me. You can have as many as you want.

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Vice Premier Teng: We shall decide the number of our participants according to the percentage of our whole population (laughter).

Secretary Kissinger: In relation to ours! So you will have 12. It will not take very long.

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